Taking care of mother earth

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Body

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast normal monsoon rainfall over the country but indicates that El Nino conditions are likely to develop which is cause for concern. According to IMD, spatial distribution suggests normal to above normal rainfall likely over many areas in the Northeast and normal to below normal rainfall likely in some pockets of the region during June to September. Temperature rising 2 to 4 degree above normal, unusual during April in many areas of the region followed by reports of hailstorms accompanied by gusty wind destroying standing crop and damaging dwelling houses, is also indicative of increase in frequency of extreme weather events in Assam. Only in December last year about 4500 houses were damaged across 132 villages in four districts due to massive hailstorm.

Such extreme weather events are grim reminder of harsh realities that grip mankind- the mother earth is sick and if the health of the ecosystem is not protected from carbon emission then climate change impact will be irreversible. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in its latest report states that more than a century of burning fossil fuels as well as unequal and unsustainable energy and land use has led to global warming of 1.1C above pre-industrial levels. "This has resulted in more frequent and more intense extreme weather events that have caused increasingly dangerous impacts on nature and people in every region of the world." It explains that every increment of warming results in rapidly escalating hazards. More intense heatwaves, heavier rainfall and other weather extremes further increase risks for human health and ecosystems. The report highlights the impacts and points out that in every region, people are dying from extreme heat and warns that climate-driven food and water insecurity is expected to increase with increased warming and when the risks combine with other adverse events, such as pandemics or conflicts, they become even more difficult to manage. The IPCC report, however, holds out hope stating that multiple, feasible and effective options are available now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to human-caused climate change but insists that emissions should be decreasing by now and will need to be cut by almost half by 2030, if global warming is to be limited to 1.5C. Climate, ecosystems and society are interconnected. The intergovernmental panel says that effective and equitable conservation of approximately 30-50% of the Earth's land, freshwater and ocean will help ensure a healthy planet and points out that the solution lies in reducing greenhouse gas emission by effecting changes in the food sector, electricity, transport, industry, buildings and land-use and making it easier for people to lead low-carbon lifestyle. Apart from decarbonising transport, energy sector, India's climate action is focussed on imbibing lifestyle changes to reduce greenhouse gas emission. The objective of country's Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) is to mobilize at least one billion Indians and other global citizens to take individual and collective action for protecting and preserving the environment in the period 2022 to 2027. Phase I of the mission seeks to effect a Change in Demand by pushing for individuals across the world practicing simple yet effective environment-friendly actions in their daily lives. Phase II is focussed on change in supply and anchored on reduction of demand in the phase I to push for industries and markets to respond and tailor supply and procurement in accordance with the revised demand while Phase III

envisages on change in large-scale industrial and government policies to support sustainable production and consumption if demand and supply situation is influenced to change. Achieving these objectives is quite challenging as individual lifestyle is often influenced by aggressive marketing of technology and products by industries and markets to be beneficial and useful to make life comfortable. Promotion of environment-friendly lifestyles of communities living in biodiversity hotspots in region like India's northeast often get overshadowed by aggressive marketing of gadgets, technology-based solutions which leads to more carbon emissions. Personal mobility solutions bring comfort but leads to more carbon emissions. Absence of efficient public transport system in cities and towns allows the space for manufacturers of automobiles to push for personal mobility solutions. Majority of such individuals cannot be expected to change their lifestyle and stop depending personal mobility solutions without a faster, efficient and comfortable public transport system. The Mission Life, therefore, focussing on policy changes and implementing the new policies will be critical to achieve the desired changes in demand supply situation. NITI Aayog has estimated that using a cloth bag instead of a plastic bag can save up to 375 million tonnes of solid waste from entering the landfill and switching off the car/scooter engines at traffic lights /railway crossings can save up to 22.5 billion kWh of energy. Changing the lifestyle at individual level can certainly protect the earth's ecosystem.

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